



MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

First Judicial District

Mission: To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

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The First Judicial District has 36 judges and more than 250 staff that handle over 120,000 cases annually in the counties of Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott and Sibley.

The First Edition

A Newsletter about the First Judicial District of the State of Minnesota

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Court is in Session: Judge Bayley at 6 Months

By Kit Murray, Red Wing Republican Eagle

“All rise.”

The Honorable Judge Douglas Bayley, dressed head to toe in a black robe, makes an appearance from the corner of the room. He walks toward the front desk while everyone in the court stands. Court 2A in the Goodhue County Justice Center is Bayley’s public desk; from listening to criminal and civil cases, to administering weddings and adoptions, his job list is filled to the top with endless tasks.

“Sit,” Bayley says, “Please, have a seat.”

County bailiff to the left, defendant and attorneys to the right, the courtroom may sometimes feel like a stage with a script and interchanging actors, reflective of a TV show, but it’s far beyond what meets the eye.

The court system plays a quintessential role in our lives, whether we recognize it or not. Courts interpret and apply the laws, written by the Legislature and signed into law by the governor, which in turn protect our rights as citizens.

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Judge Bayley at 6 Months
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With back-to-back crime and civil cases heard each day, there is never a dull moment.



Judge Bayley listens closely to defendant's stories during his court calendar and strongly considers how to rule based on what they have to say

Bayley, currently the youngest judge in Goodhue County, recently reached his first six months of serving First Judicial District. His two local colleagues are Judge Kevin Mark and Judge Lawrence Clark. Mark was first appointed in 2003, elected 2004 and again in 2010 and 2016. Clark was elected 2010 and again in last year's election.

The Work of a Judge

After working for the U.S. Department of State in foreign services at Nepal, Uganda and Washington, D.C., and 11 years as a public defender, Bayley decided to remain in public service and further pursue his love for the law after Gov. Mark Dayton appointed

him to the bench.

With most cases being resolved short of trial, judges spend a lot of time researching before appearing on the bench. This can range from studying past law cases, reviewing reports with their team and deciding what the most just ruling for those involved should be.

"When you're new at a job, you over prepare," Bayley said.

Getting up to speed on criminal and civil law has kept Bayley busy since June. With the help of

fellow judge and mentor, Mark, he's been able to shadow and ask him along with Clark, his law clerk, and other team members for help. Everyone behind the glass has a role in helping out the judges.

"My little team, I can't say anything but positive things," Bayley said.

This year also highlights Mark's 15th year as a judge in Goodhue County. When it came to asking Mark exactly what it is his position entails, he found it difficult where to even start.

"We work very autonomously, each with our own caseload," Mark said. "We are generally dealing with everything that would lead up to

the trial."

While listening to what those who appear before a judge have to say is important, it's often times not a surprise to them what the defendant might say during the trial.

"Ultimately, a lot of decisions have to come before a judge," Mark said. "The three of us are splitting those responsibilities."

Bayley mentioned that for him, one of his hardest cases has involved deciding whether or not someone should be sent to jail.

While there is no "right" way to go about representing oneself, Mark has noticed more and more people are appearing without attorneys. "A larger share of my work now, compared to when I started, is dealing with people representing themselves." Mark said.

This creates more stress for judges, as they have to help clients by showing and guiding them toward the law without doing the legwork themselves.

Mark said sometimes it can be like telling someone, "The scalpel's over there, the anesthetic's over there. Good luck."

Demographics and Court Staff

Justices and judges are elected to six-year terms in a general election. Minnesota has 10 Judicial Districts, Goodhue County being part of the first. The fully state-funded system has 290 District Court judges who listen to

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*Judge Bayley at 6 Months
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cases regarding traffic tickets, civil and family conflicts and first degree murder trials. Some courts have separate divisions, such as criminal, civil, probate, family and juvenile courts. Goodhue County is

looking to soon have a drug or treatment court to aid in helping those struggling with addiction.

"Most cases have a component of drugs or alcohol," Bayley noted. "A lot of counties, almost three fourths have them. We don't. We should."

Rather than saying, "See you next month at your meeting," those struggling with addiction will be given more of a helping hand to provide a stronger support system, he said.

Within the course of a year, around 2 million cases are filed in Minnesota's district courts. These cases begin at the District Court. Each district is managed by a chief judge, assistant chief judge and a judicial district administrator.

Goodhue County Court Administrator Christopher Channing deals with the day-to-day local operations.

"The real purpose of the courts is doing individual justice that is fair and timely," Channing said. "That's how we support the judges, everything you have to file with the

court, our staff has to deal with."

When it comes to the challenges that court staff face, one of the most challenging can be understanding people's frustrations and the



Judge Bayley's job also includes administrating weddings and adoptions

conditions they face when entering the court.

"We want to make sure we remain a neutral party," Channing said. "As much as we want to take someone's hand and guide them down the path, you just can't."

Judges in the First District listen to a variety of cases. This isn't always what happens for a typical judge. Bigger cities tend to allocate a judge to one specific type of case every day for the length of a few years. For Bayley, he prefers the broader schedule of a rural county judge, listening to a range of civil and criminal cases.

"Every day at 3 p.m., I'm told where I'll be

tomorrow," Bayley said. "It's a day-to-day schedule."

The rhythm to Bayley's schedule consists of listening to criminal cases Monday, Thursday

and Friday and civil cases on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Sometimes, however, he is moved around: he has spent days on the bench at Dakota County and has had to travel to Shakopee or Hastings to listen in on other cases.

Minnesota's first district court consists of the counties of: Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott and Sibley.

Regardless of what Bayley's day may entail, support staff has recognized his hard work and what the past six months have shown. During his eight years as bailiff at Goodhue County, Josh Stehr has noticed the strong sense of care and concern Bayley has for those who appear in court.

"He understands that for us in the justice system, the court process is many times routine," Stehr said. "But for someone coming in front of him, it is likely anything but routine. He gives each person, case and decision enough time and effort so they don't walk away feeling like they were not heard."

* Article reprinted with permission.



New Report Highlights Services Available to Minnesotans Representing Themselves in Court

Representing yourself in court?

Minnesota is a national leader in providing help to self-represented litigants.



Phone & e-mail assistance is offered by the Minnesota Statewide Self Help Center.



Online "Help Topics" and court forms are available at www.mncourts.gov.



Walk-in self help centers and self help workstations are available in many courthouses throughout Minnesota.

Learn more at: www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp



Minnesota has been lauded as a national leader in ensuring access to justice for those who cannot afford an attorney or choose to represent themselves in court. Now, a new national report is using Minnesota and seven other states to highlight how court systems around the country are utilizing technology to provide remote self-help services to self-represented litigants online and over the phone.

According to the "[Resource Guide on Serving Self-Represented Litigants Remotely](#)," published by the [Self-Represented Litigation Network](#), the examples set by Minnesota and several other states show that the delivery of services to self-represented litigants

through telephone and internet-based technologies (such as e-mail and online resources) is both effective and efficient, offering resource savings for both service providers and their customers. In addition, the report notes that remote services can actually offer benefits that traditional walk-in programs cannot, such as instant access to information, extended service hours, and greater privacy for litigants. The report was aimed at helping courts across the country design service delivery models that best meet the needs of self-represented litigants in their specific jurisdictions.

"Ensuring that all Minnesotans have access to their justice system is one of

the founding principles of our court system," said Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. "In recent years, we have greatly expanded the resources available to people representing themselves in our courts, and have explored new ways of leveraging technology to make it faster and easier for Minnesotans to access needed information about their justice system. We are proud that Minnesota has become a national leader in this important area, and are continuing to look for new ways to expand our services in the future."

The Minnesota Model for Helping Self-Represented Litigants

Minnesota is one of the highest scoring states in the nation on the [Justice Index](#), an independent study conducted by the National Center for Access to Justice that ranks how well states ensure access to the civil and criminal justice systems.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch utilizes a combination of remote and walk-in services to help self-represented litigants navigate the state's court system. The

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New Report Highlights Services (Continued from page 4)

Judicial Branch operates the [Statewide Self Help Center](#) (click on the Self Help Center Locations tab), which provides online, phone, and e-mail support to self-represented litigants across the state. In 2016, statewide Self Help Center staff responded to more than 23,000 phone calls, 5,000 e-mails, and 800 requests for court form reviews from self-represented litigants in Minnesota courts.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch website, www.mncourts.gov, also offers dozens of [Help Topics](#) on various legal issues and court process, which include answers to common questions, links to relevant court forms, and helpful tools and resources. Court customers have accessed the Judicial Branch's online Help Topics more than 1.8 million times in the past 12 months.

Eighty-nine courthouse and library locations in the state are also equipped with self-help workstations consisting of a desk, computer, printer, and phone, which can be used at no cost to find court information, print court forms, and talk over the phone with statewide Self Help Center staff about forms, procedures, and legal resources.

Minnesota's Second Judicial District in

Ramsey County offers a [Family Court Self-Help Center](#) (click on the Family Court Center tab, then on the Family Court Self-Help Center subtab) with in-person service available Monday through Thursday.

Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District in Hennepin County [offers in-person self-help service](#) (click on the Self Help Center tab) at the Hennepin County Government Center and family court self-help services at the Hennepin County Family Justice Center.

Minnesota's Tenth Judicial District – which includes the district courts in Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Sherburne, Washington, and Wright counties – offers [daily or weekly in-person service](#) (click on the Self-Help Center tab) at each of the eight courthouse locations in the district. Staff also responds to telephone and e-mail requests for assistance.

In addition to the services provided through the Minnesota Judicial Branch, Minnesotans can also find legal resources at their local [county law library](#), or receive legal help through many non-profit [legal aid organizations](#) and volunteer attorney clinics.

For more information on all the resources available to self-represented litigants across Minnesota, visit <http://www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp> or call the statewide Self Help Center at (651) 259-3888.

Services Available from Self Help Center Staff

Self Help Center staff are able to provide instructions on how to complete court forms; review filled-out forms for completeness; help self-represented litigants locate free or low-cost legal services and programs; and provide information about court process, practice, and procedure.

This help is available for a wide variety of court proceedings, including: civil actions; conciliation court matters; criminal expungement; divorce, child support, custody, and family law; landlord and tenant law; name changes; and much more.

While Self Help Center staff are not able to directly provide legal advice, strategy, or research, they will be able to connect customers with services that offer legal advice and guidance.



Minnesota Court Payment Center Recognized as 2017 Harvard Ash Center Bright Idea in Government

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, recently recognized the Minnesota Court Payment Center (CPC) as part of the 2017 Bright Ideas in Government initiative. The CPC



is part of a cohort that includes programs from all levels of government - school districts, counties, cities, states, federal agencies, and tribal nations, as well as public-private partnerships - that represent the next horizon in government work to improve services, solve problems, and work on behalf of citizens.

"These programs demonstrate that there are no prerequisites for doing the good work of governing," said Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in American Government Program at the Ash Center. "Small towns and massive cities, huge federal agencies and local school districts, large budgets or no budgets at all - what makes government work best is the drive to do better, and this group proves that drive can be found anywhere."

The establishment of the Minnesota CPC

was a multi-year initiative aimed at centralizing the processing of payable citations and traffic tickets - those not requiring a court appearance - from case initiation through case disposition, for all 87 counties in Minnesota. The goal of this initiative was to increase efficiency by centralizing work that had been done separately by 87 district courts, while providing a convenient, one-stop resource for members of the public to pay fines online, by phone, or through the mail, and to speak with a clerk about their citations.

The CPC was first established in late 2009, and by June 2011 the program was managing citation processing and payments for district courts in 85 of the state's 87 counties. An evaluation completed in 2013 showed the CPC had reduced the payables

case processing workload in those 85 counties, and that centralization had helped reduce the statewide number of Judicial Branch staff working on payables processing. The Minnesota Judicial Branch transferred Ramsey County citations processing to the CPC in July

2015, and Hennepin County citations on January 25, 2016, completing the statewide transition. In 2016, Minnesota CPC staff processed more than 930,000 citations and \$90 million in receipts.

"The Court Payment Center has made it faster and easier for the public to complete their business with the court, and created significant new efficiencies in our judicial system," said State Court Administrator Jeff Shorba. "This project represents just one way that the Judicial Branch is working to leverage new technologies to improve our service to the public, and we are honored to receive this recognition from the Ash Center and Harvard University."

This is the fifth cohort recognized through the Bright Ideas program, an initiative of the

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*Minnesota Court Payment Center Recognized
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broader Innovations in American Government Awards program. For consideration as a Bright Idea, programs must currently be in operation or in the process of launching, have sufficient operational resources, and must be administered by one or more governmental entities; nonprofit, private sector, and union initiatives are eligible if operating in partnership with a governmental

organization. Bright Ideas are showcased on the Ash Center's Government Innovators Network, an online platform for practitioners and policymakers to share innovative public policy solutions.

Please visit the Government Innovators Network at <http://innovations.harvard.edu> for the full list of Bright Ideas programs, and for more information regarding the Innovations in American Government Awards.



About the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. Through its research, education, international programs, and government innovations awards, the Center fosters creative and effective government problem solving and serves as a catalyst for addressing many of the most pressing needs of the world's citizens. For more information, visit www.ash.harvard.edu.

Efforts to Improve and Enhance the Delivery of Justice Highlighted in 2016 Annual Report



The recently released 2016 Annual Report to the Community highlights the efforts of the

Minnesota Judicial Branch to improve and enhance the delivery of justice in the state. The report provides an overview of many initiatives undertaken in 2016 in support of

the Judicial Branch strategic plan, updates from the state's district and appellate courts, and case filing statistics.

"By constitutional imperative and statute, Minnesota's courts must provide an open door for justice," said Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. "The state's Constitution promises every Minnesotan the right 'to obtain justice

freely...promptly and without delay.' This promise guides the work of the Minnesota Judicial Branch."

The Annual Report details the many ways the Judicial Branch worked in 2016 to increase the efficiency of our courts, improve outcomes for court participants, and expand access to justice in Minnesota.

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2016 Annual Report
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These include:

- Building on our successful transition to electronic court records, which has increased convenience for court users, and made it easier than ever before for the public to interact with their court;
- Establishing more drug courts and other treatment court programs throughout the state, making this proven and effective criminal justice model available to more Minnesotans;
- Expanding our nation-leading efforts to provide help and support to people who choose to represent themselves in court proceedings;
- Providing long overdue increases to the per diem and mileage reimbursement paid to jurors; and
- Launching the first statewide initiative aimed at improving the safety and security of our courthouses.

The Annual Report also provides information on a few First Judicial District highlights, including the McLeod County courthouse jail expansion and security upgrade, Le Sueur County moving forward with a new justice center, Law Day events across the First District, and free legal clinics expanding to Goodhue County.

"I am proud of the accomplishments of our employees and judges, and remain committed to our mission to provide equal access for the timely resolution of cases and controversies," said Gildea.

The 2016 Annual Report to the Community can be found on the Branch website at www.mncourts.gov/publications.

Minnesota Judges Play Key Role in Successful High School Mock Trial Season

The Minnesota high school mock trial season recently concluded with a trial in the ceremonial courtroom of the Stearns County Courthouse – the courtroom made famous for its use in the 1992 film,

"The Mighty Ducks." Students from Lakeville South High School prevailed over the mock trial team from Maple River High School (Mapleton, MN) in the final round of the 2017 Mock Trial State

Tournament held March 3 and 4 in St. Cloud.

More than [80 high schools](#) across

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*High School Mock Trial Season
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Minnesota has teams that participate in mock trial, a competitive, law-related education program that introduces students to the American legal system and provides a challenging opportunity for personal growth and achievement. Mock trial is a simulated trial court experience, in which students prepare and try a case playing both the attorney and witness roles. Teams are judged based on their knowledge and understanding of the fictitious case, their poise and professionalism in the courtroom, their ability to think on their feet, and their adherence to court rules and procedure.

Minnesota's [high school mock trial](#)

[program](#) is operated by the Minnesota State Bar Association (MSBA).

Critical to the success of the mock trial program is the participation of real attorneys and judicial officers, who volunteer their time to serve as judges for the mock trial program. According to the MSBA, 700 attorneys and judges are needed during the three months of mock trial competitions. In addition, Minnesota judges open their courtrooms for use by the program, allowing students to gain the valuable experience of presenting their cases in real court facilities.

During the 2017 season, 27 Minnesota judicial officers presided over mock trials. Tenth Judicial District Judge James E. Dehn, chambered in Isanti County, presided over the final round of the state tournament in St. Cloud. Judge Dehn is the longest-active judge in Minnesota mock trial.

Scoring judges in the final round included Minnesota Supreme Court Justice David Lillehaug and Fourth Judicial District Judge Peter Cahill of Hennepin County.

Judge Cahill chairs MSBA's Mock Trial Advisory Committee, and Justice Lillehaug is chair of its Rules Subcommittee. First Judicial District Judge Mark Vandelist of Le Sueur County, another committee member, judged at the state tournament and spoke at the awards luncheon.

Numerous officers of the Judicial Branch presided over mock trials at regional tournaments including First District Judges Michael Baxter, chambered in Dakota County, as well as Eric Braaten and Michael Wentzel, both chambered in Carver County.

"I've seen first-hand how the MSBA's mock trial program helps students think and communicate clearly," said Justice Lillehaug. "On behalf of the Minnesota Supreme Court, I want to congratulate all the students and teachers that participated this season, and thank the MSBA and the attorneys and judges who volunteered their time and energy to educate students about their justice system."

Committee for Equality and Justice Releases 2016 Annual Report

The Minnesota Judicial Branch Committee for Equality and Justice (CEJ) has released its 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report, which highlights the work from across the Judicial Branch and the CEJ to collaboratively advance efforts to eliminate bias from court operations, promote equal access to the court, and inspire a high level of trust and public confidence in the Minnesota Judicial Branch. The report is published at www.mncourts.gov/MinnesotaJudicialCouncil/CEJ.aspx.

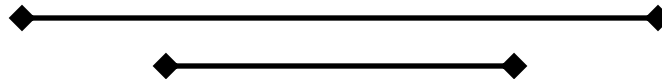
The CEJ is an advisory committee to the [Minnesota Judicial Council](http://www.mncourts.gov/MinnesotaJudicialCouncil/). The CEJ is comprised of judicial officers, attorneys, court employees, and members of the public from across the state, reflective of the state's geographic and demographic diversity.

The CEJ works closely with Equal Justice Committees in each of the state's [10 judicial districts](#). Equal Justice Committees (EJCs) are active in each of the 10 judicial districts across the state. EJCs are comprised of judges, court staff, and justice partners from the judicial district, who meet frequently on local access to justice topics. Each EJC has a representative who serves on the Committee for Equality and Justice to provide input, share best practices, and help implement statewide goals and initiatives across the Judicial Branch.

One of the primary roles of the EJCs is to hold community dialogue sessions within their respective districts. These community discussions are key for the courts to be informed on barriers to justice for community

members, learn from individuals' experiences in court, and build a relationship between judges and members of the public. The goal is to have a two-way discussion with community members that helps promote greater trust and public confidence in the justice system.

The 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report includes information on the seven community dialogue sessions held in the past year, including events in Bemidji, Duluth, Minneapolis, Rochester, and St. Cloud. Each EJC produces written summary reports following these community dialogue sessions, which are available online at www.mncourts.gov/MinnesotaJudicialCouncil/CEJ.aspx.



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